

gharial. Herds of bluebull, chinkara and sambar are a common sight. On the road to Panna are the spectacular Pandav Falls. Alternate picnic sites are Benisagar Dam, Raneh Falls and Rangan Lake, while interesting trips can be made to Rajgarh Palace, now being converted into a Heritage Hotel, and Dhubela Museum. Further away is Bandhavgarh National Park and tranquil Chitrakoot.

**Dubela Palace** : The palace was built in 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. by Maharaja Chhatrasal. Thin bricks, sand and lime were used in the construction of the palace. At present, the building houses a museum **Tomb of Maharaj Chhatrasal** : Built in 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the tomb of Maharaj Chhatrasal is an octagonal structure. The samadhi of Maharaja Chhatrasal is situated in the middle with a pradakshina path. It is undoubtedly the finest monument in the Dhubela-Mau Sahania-Maheba complex.

**Raneh Falls** : Raneh Falls is on the majestic Ken river. The main attraction here is the Canyon of Crystalline Granite 5km long and 100ft deep. This granite has shades of pink, red, misty white, green and gray.

The Chhatrapur district has many monuments of archaeological importance including cenotaphs, fortresses and temples. An exploration of these remains of glory will add to your experience. Bandi Saliyya, remains of ancient temple group at Kaindi-9 kms from the district head quarters of Chhatrapur ,Drongiri Jain Temples Sandhwa, The tomb of Maharaja Chhatrasal's spouse Maharani Kamlapati and Mastani Mahal at Mau Sahania.

#### How to Reach

**By Air** : Services link Khajuraho with Delhi and Varanasi.

**By Rail** : Khajuraho has its own railway station linking it to Delhi, Jhansi (172 km), Harpalpur (94 km) & Mahoba (64 km), Satna (117 km) which is on the Mumbai-Allahabad line of the Central Railway is a convenient rail link for those coming from Mumbai, Kolkata, Kanpur, Udaipur and Varanasi.

**By Road** : Khajuraho is connected by regular buses with Satna, Harpalpur, Jhansi and Mahoba.

**Best Season** : July to March

**Your Host** :

- Hotel Jhankar (MPT)
- Hotel Payal (MPT)
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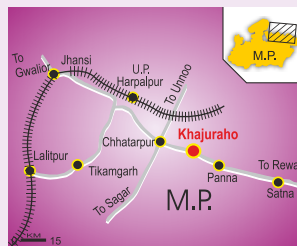
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# Khajuraho

## World Heritage Site

The temples of Khajuraho are India's unique gift to the world, representing, as they do, a paean to life, to love, to joy, perfect in execution and sublime in expression. Life, in every form and mood, has been captured in stone, testifying not only to the craftsman's artistry but also to the extraordinary breadth of vision of the Chandela Rajputs under whose rule the temples were conceived and constructed.

The Khajuraho temples were built in the short span of a hundred years, from 950-1050 AD in a truly inspired burst of creativity. Of the 85 original temples, 22 have survived till today to constitute one of the world's great artistic wonders.

The creators of Khajuraho claimed descent from the moon and the legend behind the founding of this great dynasty and the temples is a fascinating one. Hemwati, the lovely young daughter of a Brahmin priest, was seduced by the moon god while bathing in a forest pool. The child born of this union was Chandravarman, founder of the Chandela dynasty. Brought up in the forests by his mother who sought refuge from a censorious society, Chandravarman, when established as a ruler, had a dream visitation from his mother. It is said that she implored him to build temples that would reveal human passions, and in doing so, bring about a realisation of the emptiness of human desire. It is also possible that the Chandelas were followers of the Tantric cult, which believes that gratification of earthly desires is a step towards attaining the infinite liberation or nirvana.

Why they chose Khajuraho, even then a small village, as the site for their great complex is also open to speculation. One theory is that, given the eclectic nature of their faith and the many beliefs represented in the temples, the Chandelas conceived Khajuraho as a seat of religion and learning, to bring together many sects.

With their decline, the temples lay forgotten for many centuries, covered by the encroaching forests, victim to the ravages of the elements. Re-discovered in the early 20th century, restored and cleaned, the temples of Khajuraho once again testify to a past glory.



The Khajuraho temples constitute one of the world's great artistic wonders

Architecturally too, they are unique, being different from the temple prototype of their period. Each stands on a high masonry platform with a marked upward direction in the structures, further enhanced by vertical projection to create the effect of grace and lightness. Each of the chief compartments is mounted by its own roof, grouped so that the highest is in the centre, the lowest over the portico; a highly imaginative recreation of the rising peaks of the Himalayas, abode of the gods.

The three main compartments are the entrance (ardha-mandapa), assembly hall (mandapa) and sanctum (garbha griha), with further additions in the more developed temples.

Three geographical divisions group the temples: western, eastern and southern.

### What to See

#### Western Group

**Kandariya Mahadeo** : Approximately 800 sculptures are carved on the interior and exterior walls of this magnificent temples. The lintels of the sanctum and the doorjambs have rich floral carvings. Inside the sanctum stands a Shivalinga. Three bands of sculptures on the outer walls depicts gods and goddesses and mythical beasts. The erotic sculptures are concentrated on the northern and southern façade.



Life in every form and mood, captured in stone

Other themes of sculpture in the temple include- warriors and hunters, acrobats, musicians, dancers, devotees and amorous couples.

**Chausath Yogini** : The only granite temple and the earliest surviving shrine of the group (900 AD), it is dedicated to Kali. Only 35 of the original 65 shrines remain. Another Kali temple (originally dedicated to Vishnu) is the Devi Jagdambe Temple.

**Chitragupta Temple** : The temple walls depict an artistic profusion of sculpture of Gods and Goddesses, apsaras and amorous couples. In the central niche of the southern façade, there is a magnificent carving of Lord Vishnu with 11 heads. The temple is dated to 11<sup>th</sup> century and is also known locally as Bharatiji's temple.

**Vishwanath Temple** : The interior of the temple contain some of the well known sculptures of Khajuraho like a lady playing flute, a mother with her child and another lady painting her foot. The ceiling is equally profusing with sculptures of floral patterns.

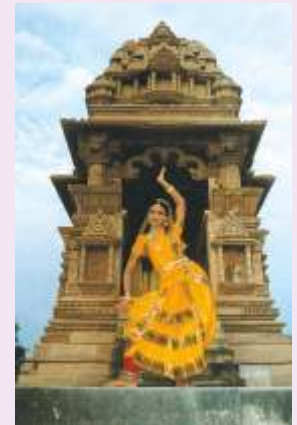
**Lakshmana Temple** : The Laxman Temple in a Panchayatan type of temple meaning there are 4 shrines at the corner of the courtyard. The subsidiary shrine also displays the outburst of creativity in stones with carved panels and ornamented doorways. The main temple is entered through richly embellished doorways known as *Makar Tornas* for the arched crocodiles

**Matangeswara Temple** : Still a living place of worship, the temple is dedicated to Shiva, has an eight feet high lingam and is outside the

precincts of the Western Group.

#### Eastern Group

**Parsvanath Temple** : The group's largest Jain temple and exquisite in detail. The sculptures on the northern outer wall are particularly noteworthy. The themes depict, in charming detail, everyday activity. Within, a throne faces the bull emblem of the first tirthankara, Adinath. The Parsvanath image was installed in 1860.



The annual festival of dances at Khajuraho has become a landmark cultural event

**Ghantai Temple** : This Jain temple has a frieze which depicts the 16 dreams of Mahavira's mother, and a Jain goddess on a winged Garuda.

**Adhinath Temple** : Dedicated to the Jain saint, Adinath, the temple is lavishly embellished with sculpted figures, including yakshis.

The three Hindu temples of the group are the **Brahma**, containing a four-faced lingam, the **Vamana**, which is adorned on its outer walls with carving of apsaras in a variety of sensuous attitudes; and the **Javari**, with a richly carved gateway and exterior sculptures.

#### Southern Group

**Duladeo Temple** : This temple is dedicated to Shiva and is dated in 1000-1150 AD. Shiva is known as Dulhadev here meaning the holy bridegroom. Historians hold it to be the last of the temples built by the Chandellas. The temple is laid in the seven chariot plan (*saptarata*).

**Chaturbhuj Temple** : This temple has a massive, intricately-carved image of Vishnu in the sanctum.

**Sound & Light Show** : This fascinating Son-et-Lumière spectacle evokes the life and times of the great Chandela Kings and traces the story of the unique temples during 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Mounted in the complex of the Western Group of temples, the 50-minute show runs in Hindi and in English every evening. Amitabh Bachchan, the Indian super star, narrates the story of Khajuraho in his mesmerising voice.

**State Museum of Tribal and Folk Arts** : A fine collection of masterpieces of tribal and folk arts and artifacts from all over Madhya Pradesh is on display at the Chandela Cultural Complex. The State Museum has more than 500 representative items of terracottas, metal craft, woodcraft, tribal and folk paintings, tattoos, jewellery and masks. **Timings** : The museum is open on all days except Mondays and Government Holiday from 12 noon to 8.00 p.m.

**New Temples Excavated** : In recent excavations at Bija Mandal, located 3 km south-east of the western group of temples, remains of several temples even older than the originally known 85 have been found.

### Excursions

**Panna National Park** : Panna National Park, 32 km away and a mere 30-minute drive from Khajuraho, spreads along the river Ken. The jungles today harbour many species of wildlife. The tiger can be glimpsed here, with other rare species such as the leopard, wolf and